

Brits move against Sudan peace treaty

by Muriel Mirak Weissbach

No sooner had the ink dried on the historic peace treaty signed on April 21, between the majority of rebel factions and the Sudanese government, than the British deployed their tools to denounce, slander, and wreck the effort. The peace treaty (see *EIR*, May 9) represents the first viable act taken by any Sudanese government to put an end to the bloody civil strife which has ravaged the country intermittently for 40 years.

The inclusion in the treaty of provisions for a referendum on unity or secession, following a four-year interim reconstruction period, satisfies the demand that the remaining rebel faction, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of John Garang, has always claimed was the precondition for his ceasing hostilities. Parts of the political opposition grouping, known as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which includes the Umma party of Sadiq al Mahdi and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of Othman Al Mirghani, have also campaigned for the right to self-determination for southern Sudan; yet they, like Garang, have rejected the treaty. The fact is, the signing of the treaty has exposed the fraud of both the military and political wings of the so-called rebels: Theirs never was a fight for any of the aims they claimed, but has always been a strategy to overthrow the current government and break the nation up into as many as six micro-states.

Both the political opposition and the military forces of the Garang faction, are British assets. It has been documented that through 1995 and 1996, the deputy speaker of the British House of Lords, Baroness Caroline Cox, who is also head of Christian Solidarity International (CSI), literally brought Sadiq al Mahdi and Mirghani together, and forced them, as ersatz allies, to acknowledge Garang as their military leader. The ungainly alliance was glued together by Cox personally in Asmara, Eritrea, and has held—albeit with the stability of a three-legged stool—ever since.

Intense diplomacy on both sides

Now, in the wake of the peace treaty, the British Privy Council has mobilized the NDA and Cox herself, to whip up public support for their war strategy. Barely a week after the Khartoum signing ceremony, Cox popped up in Washington, D.C., and presented a Congressional hearing with a briefing on "The Persecution of Christians around the World: Focus

on Sudan," a rehashed version of the same fraudulent testimony she has presented over the years. Only the date has been changed. In early May, Cox reportedly travelled to the Nuba Mountains—as always, entering the country illegally—and met with the few remaining rebel forces there. After her visit, those forces, under Jusef Kuwa, who refused to sign the peace treaty, received massive arms supplies.

Also in May, serious diplomatic efforts were launched to bring Garang into the peace process. The SPLA minority faction leader had been invited by Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, to take part in a meeting between Sudanese President Gen. Omar al Bashir and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, in Nairobi on May 10. Riak Machar, the leader of the South Sudanese Independence Movement (SSIM), which has signed for peace with Khartoum, also urged mediators to arrange a tête-à-tête with Garang for him. Garang bowed out of the Nairobi meeting, saying he needed two weeks to reflect. Another date has been set for him to meet President al Bashir, at the end of May, but there is no guarantee he will appear. In that time frame, he has made his way to London, en route to the United States, together with Sadiq al Mahdi and Mansur Khalid, the "spokesman" of the NDA.

The stopover in London provided the opportunity for the NDA people to receive fresh briefings from their political controllers in the British establishment. With the change of guard at 10 Downing Street, it may be that there will be cosmetic changes made in the packaging of the Sudanese opposition's operations. In fact, Sadiq al Mahdi was not accorded the usual red carpet treatment, on arrival in London this time. One might say, in fact, that the diplomatic weather in London was a bit chilly. Reportedly, he had applied to the Westminster University to deliver a lecture, but was turned down. Instead, he had to rely on the apparatus of the Egyptian Journalists' Association, a front for Egyptian intelligence networks there, to find a speaking forum. Although Sadiq al Mahdi called a press conference in a large room in the Hilton Hotel, only three journalists showed up, freelancer Eric Walters, Eva Dardrian (a freelance intelligence gatherer), and the *Guardian's* Sudan watcher, Kathy Evans. Following his scheduled lecture on May 17, under the Egyptian press auspices, Mahdi was slated to leave for Washington.

In Washington, the trio of Mahdi, Garang, and Khalid is expected to take their case to the U.S. Institute for Peace, the members of the U.S. Congress, representatives of the State Department, and the Pentagon. The reason is clear: Following the Khartoum peace treaty signing, the U.S. ambassador to Sudan greeted the event positively, as did the Clinton administration's spokesmen, in briefings in the capital. Sudanese Ambassador to the United States Mahdi Ibrahim Mohamed, who had presided over the Khartoum ceremonies, reported in a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on May 5, that his government hoped for supportive action by the United States, for peace. He said his government

was “eager to write the last chapter on the war in the South by obtaining John Garang’s heart and mind and signature to the Peace Agreement and integration into the political process, where disputes are settled by free and fair elections, not by guns and violence.” The ambassador went on to say that his government “would *welcome mediation towards that end by the United States, and has broached that idea at the highest levels of the United States administration*” (emphasis added).

If the Clinton administration seizes this opportunity to support the peace process, and broaden it to include the recalcitrant Garang, this can change the course of history in the African continent, contributing to reversing the process of destruction and death now rampant in the Great Lakes region. Defeating the British ploy in Sudan is a first step to defeating the British in the region, where the ongoing genocide and destruction of nations is being perpetrated. Cognizant of the strategic implications, London will do everything possible to prevent effective action from Washington. Thus, the trip of Sadiq al Mahdi, Garang, and Mansur Khalid to the United States.

Although not so decisive as American support, strong backing by Germany for the peace process would be important, and is feasible. The German ambassador in Khartoum reportedly also welcomed the peace treaty. Furthermore, a resolution was passed in the German Bundestag (Parliament) prior to the treaty signing, which endorsed the peace process in Sudan, and called on the Bonn government to intervene to facilitate further progress. It is, therefore, no coincidence that Baroness Cox herself would deploy to Germany, to carry on her propaganda war against peace. She will be there on June 20-22 for a conference sponsored by the Evangelical Academy, on the topic “Sudan: Between Human Rights Violations and the Search for Peace.”

A unique opportunity

There has never been a more propitious moment for peace in Sudan, nor has there been a greater opportunity, to defeat the historical ambitions of the British, to decimate the continent and rape it of its resources.

Those in Washington, D.C., in the Congress and the administration, who are morally committed to pursue the cause of peace for Africa, must exploit the opportunity provided by the visit of Garang, al Mahdi, and Khalid. They must be confronted with the hard facts of the peace treaty, which has been signed by political and military leaders of the rebel forces, representing the vast majority of the population of southern Sudan. The demands of Garang et al. for self-determination have been met in the treaty. In addition, an in-depth strategy for winning the peace has been mapped out and agreed upon, to satisfy the just demands of the Sudanese people, for economic progress, social repacification, wealth and power sharing, and representative democracy. There is no reason for any honest, peace-loving Sudanese to reject this treaty.

Promise of harmony on Indian subcontinent

by Susan B. Maitra and Ramtanu Maitra

With three months left before the 50th anniversary independence celebrations, India and Pakistan took an historic step in Male, in the Maldives archipelago located in the Indian Ocean, by agreeing to set up working groups to study problems that bedevil their bilateral relations. Prime Ministers I.K. Gujral of India and Mian Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan, both of whom hail from the Punjab of pre-partition days, announced their intent to institutionalize bilateral discussions, following their luncheon meeting at the Kurumba resort, where the heads of government of the South Asian nations met on May 12-14 to strengthen their relations.

Both prime ministers made clear that it is their personal trust and respect for each other that enabled them to come to an agreement. Without identifying specific characteristics of the working groups, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said that working groups will be set up on various subjects and would be identified by the foreign secretaries of the two countries when they meet, “perhaps by the end of this month.”

For a better future

The decision to improve relations between the two countries and move toward bringing unity and harmony to the subcontinent, is in line with recent developments which saw an improvement in India-Bangladesh relations. Since coming to terms on sharing the water of the Ganges River, India and Bangladesh have moved further toward developing transportation and electrical power distribution grids. If and when the India-Pakistan relations improve further, the southern tier of the India section of the Eurasian Land-Bridge will get a boost, and connecting Southeast Asia with Iran via the Indian subcontinent will become a reality.

The southern flank of the Eurasian Land-Bridge connects India through Pakistan and Iran and the Central Asian nations to Europe in the west. In the east—India’s linkage to Myanmar, and then southward to connect Singapore by land, through Bangladesh—a stretch of railroad linking Calcutta to Yangon is necessary to enhance the potential of the southern flank. Recent developments in bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh, and the prospect of Myanmar becoming a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations